

VI. Coordination of Local Mitigation Planning

Local Capability Assessment

The Bureau of Emergency Management has been actively working with Regional Planning Commissions and local communities to develop local mitigation plans and identify mitigation measures and to develop local hazard mitigation plans. Most notably, the State recently adopted NH Revised Statutes Annotated - RSA 674:2 which states that a Master Plan adopted under this statute may include a “natural hazards section which documents the physical characteristics, severity, frequency, and extent of any potential natural hazards to the community. It should identify those elements of the built environment at risk from natural hazards as well as extent of current and future vulnerability that may result from current zoning and development policies.”

Summary of Local Capability Assessment

Local Hazard Mitigation Plans submitted to the Bureau of Emergency Management include their own individual local capability assessments. These local assessments include a review of the effectiveness of each community’s programs by the local hazard mitigation committees. The Bureau of Emergency Management provides technical assistance and recommendations for improving a given communities programs, however, local towns and cities are not required by law to implement the state’s recommendations.

The following list provides an overview of programs and regulations for most of the communities in New Hampshire. The overall effectiveness of these programs is assessed at the local level in the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. BEM reviews the local plan and has determined that all of these programs are adequate to excellent in quality. The individual assessment by the local plans identify whether or not they need improvement. If a problem is identified the BEM will provide technical assistance to those individual communities.

Emergency Operation Plan
Building Code
Floodplain Ordinance
Elevation Certificates
Community Rating System
Emergency Warning System
Subdivision Regulations
Site Plan Regulations
Road Design Standards
Bridge Design Standards
Bridge Maintenance Program

Storm Drain/ Culvert Maintenance
Aquifer Protection District
Shoreland Protection Program
Hazardous Materials Plan/Team
Public Education Programs
Master Plan
Wetland Conservation District
Capital Improvement Program
Emergency Back-up Power
Mitigation Grants

State Assistance for Local Plan Development

The NH Bureau of Emergency Management (BEM), Planning Section, provides technical assistance to Regional Planning Commissions and local communities that request support in the development of Local Hazard Mitigation Plans. BEM offers assistance through staff in the planning section, distributing the “Hazard Mitigation Planning Guide for New Hampshire Communities (2003)” document both in paper and digital format, and mitigation planning brochures offered through FEMA. However, since 2001 BEM has largely relied upon the nine Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) to facilitate and develop hazard mitigation plans for local communities. Most communities in New Hampshire do not have the staff and resources available to develop a Plan. The RPCs have been trained over the years by BEM and FEMA and have the experience and expertise to assist in the development of local Plans.

The State Hazard Mitigation Officer, the NFIP Coordinator, the Office of Energy & Planning and the Regional Planning Commissions work with local governments by providing the following:

- Model zoning ordinances
- Local hazard mitigation planning guidance and assistance
- Local mitigation planning workshops
- Sharing examples of good mitigation planning methods and products that have been approved by FEMA
- Assistance in the identification of cost-effective and environmentally sound mitigation projects.
- Natural hazard, demographic and economic data for communities to use in their local plans.
- Vulnerability assessment and loss estimation modeling data, as well as benefit-cost analysis guidance.

Funding for planning assistance is provided by grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. These include annual planning grants through the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program, Emergency Management Planning Grants (EMGP) and the Pre Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grants. In addition, communities are also eligible for funding of mitigation plans under the Emergency Management Assistance grants provided by FEMA through BEM. The RPC planning initiative mentioned above is funded completely by the PDM grant program.

Summary of Funding Sources for Local Mitigation		
Funding Source	Eligible Projects	Agency
Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)	Build state and local emergency management capability, and serve as the foundation for first responder activities.	Bureau of Emergency Management (BEM)
Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant (PDM)	Implementing cost-effective hazard mitigation activities that complement a comprehensive mitigation program.	BEM
Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant (FMA)	Implementing measures to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other structures insurable under the NFIP.	BEM
Hazard Mitigation Grant Program	Structural Mitigation Projects due to a Presidential Disaster Declaration.	Department of Homeland Security and BEM
FEMA Supplemental Funding	Funding assistance to update all-hazards Emergency Operations Plans, with an emphasis on WMD.	Department of Homeland Security and BEM
Emergency Management Assistance (EMA) Grants	Mitigation Plans, Emergency Operations Centers.	Department of Homeland Security and BEM
Citizen Corp	To support the formation of state and local Citizen Corps Councils to help drive local citizen participation by coordinating Citizen Corps programs.	Department of Homeland Security and BEM
School Emergency Response and Crisis Management Plan Discretionary Grant Program	To provide school districts with funds to strengthen and improve current school crisis plans in preparation for emergencies including potential terrorist attacks.	Department of Education

Review Process of Local Plans and Projects

Plan Review

All plans completed by the Regional Planning Commissions and other independent consultants, regardless of funding sources, are submitted to BEM. In addition, one copy is forwarded to FEMA Region 1. The Planning Section Staff reviews each plan using the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Review developed by FEMA. This review is completed within 30 days then sent to FEMA Region 1 for review. If FEMA has comments on a Plan they send their comments to BEM as well as the community. Once revisions are made and approved by FEMA the community will formally approve and adopt the Plan.

As the BEM Planning Section staff reviews local Hazard Mitigation Plans information that is applicable to a regional or state level of planning, will be collected and available within 60 days for inclusion to future revisions of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan. Likewise, Sections of the State Plan is posted on BEM's website for local communities, Regional Planning Commissions, and the general public to incorporate into their Local Hazard Mitigation Plans.

Project Review

The SHMO is responsible for project management and record keeping, including project files which contain all correspondence, applications, vouchers, reports, receipts, and related documentation. BEM support staff will assist in the preparation of the state/local grant agreement, all correspondence and project files. Quarterly progress reports will be submitted to FEMA by the SHMO based on the reports provided by the Applicant's Agent. A final report will also be required from each applicant, and closeout documents will be submitted to FEMA by the SHMO.

Mitigation Project Closeout procedures required by the communities include the following:

- A. The sub-grantee shall submit closeout information in the form of a final report on work done, expenditures, and other costs.
- B. Project closeout will be noted in the project files.
- C. Final payment shall be made along with a closeout letter.

Prioritization of Local Planning & Projects

Mitigation Planning is a high priority for the Bureau of Emergency Management (BEM). Consequently, BEM allocated the 2004/05 PDM grant money to the Regional Planning Commissions (RPC). The RPCs complete the majority of mitigation plans within the State and select communities based on population, hazard risk, and a community's interest and involvement in mitigation. BEM also provides direct technical assistance to communities that develop plans on their own. Lastly, several communities a year will apply for and receive EMA grants. These towns typically contract independent consultants to develop mitigation plans.

Prioritization of mitigation projects typically fall under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). To date, there have been no FEMA approved PDM project applications submitted by towns or cities in New Hampshire. In the future, if there is more than one PDM project application submitted to the State, the HMGP requirements described below will be utilized for their review.

1. Project Review Process:

The State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO) will review all applications for completeness and to ensure they meet state and federal eligibility criteria.

A Cost Benefit Review will be conducted on all projects submitted utilizing FEMA BCA software

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Review Committee will review and make funding recommendations on the applications. This is to be based on communities with the highest risk and the greatest pressures caused by development.

The SHMO will provide the Director of BEM, in prioritized order, those grant applications recommended for FEMA approval by the Mitigation Grant Review Committee.

The Director of BEM will forward applications to FEMA for funding approval.

2. Project Ranking Process and Criteria:

The Mitigation Grant Review Committee will rank all eligible projects. Ranking will include consideration based on meeting the:

- a. Objectives and criteria within the State Hazard Mitigation Plan;
- b. Federal and state criteria as outlined earlier in this document;
- c. 44 CFR Section 206.435 (b);
- d. Membership in the National Flood Insurance Program;
- e. FEMA Approved Hazard Mitigation Plan;
- f. Communities with the highest level of risk
- g. Repetitive Loss Property;
- h. Communities feeling the highest pressures caused by development
- i. Available funding.

Applicants will be formally notified of the results of the Committee's ranking and reviewing process and of their recommended or non-recommended status by the SHMO. Applicants not being recommended for funding may appeal the Committee's decision under specific criteria.

3. Selection of Projects:

The SHMO will submit to the Director of BEM those projects that have been reviewed and ranked by the Mitigation Grant Review Committee and are recommended for submission to FEMA for final approval and funding. Applicants will be notified by the Director's office if the application has been approved for forward to FEMA.

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